

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

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R 271618Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3113

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6577

E.O. 11652 XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET OFFICIALS REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO IMPROVED U.S.-SOVIET
RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: VISIT OF EUR/SOV DIRECTOR GARRISON DURING WEEK OF
APRIL 19 PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR NUMBER OF HIGHRANKING SOVIET
"AMERICANOLOGISTS" TO COMMENT ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE
MESSAGE WAS THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS FIRMLY COMMITTEE TO
IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. WE HEARD THIS FROM
ARBATOV OF THE USA INSTITUTE, SENIOR PRAVDA AND TV POLITICAL
COMMENTATOR YURIY ZHUKOV, AND OFFICIALS OF THE MFA'S USA DIVISION.
AMERICAN SPECIALIST IN THE CC'S INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT NIKOLAY
MOSTOVETS WAS GENERALLY VERY UPBEAT, ALTHOUGH HE PREFERRED TO LET
OTHER SOVIETS (AT ADCM'S LUNCH FOR GARRISON) CARRY THE CONVER-
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SATION. ALTHOUGH BOTH ARBATOV AND ZHUKOV CRITICIZED SOME ASPECTS

OF CURRENT ADMINISTRATION POLICY AT A SPASO HOUSE LUNCH, BOTH ALSO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THEY UNDERSTOOD THE POSITION OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

2. AT BOTH SOCIAL EVENTS AND A CALL AT THE MFA, IN CONNECTION WITH THE APRIL 19-23 VISIT TO MOSCOW OF SOV DIRECTOR GARRISON, SOVIET OFFICIALS MADE A POINT OF AFFIRMING THAT THE USSR REMAINS COMMITTEED TO DETENTE, WISHES TO PROCEED WITH THE BUSINESS AT HAND, AND WILL SHOW UNDERSTANDING OF THE ADMINISTRATIONS'S POSITION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE U.S. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

3. FOR EXAMPLE, USA AND CANADA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV SAID THE USSR WAS FIRM IN ITS PURSUIT OF GOOD RELATIONS, BUT HE WAS NOT CERTAIN ABOUT THE U.S. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY MUST SAY THINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CAMPAIGN THAT THEY OTHERWISE WOULD NOT, BUT HE WONDERED IF THE PRESIDENT DID NOT GO TOO FAR -- TO THE POINT WHERE THE PRESIDENT'S ULTIMATE POSITION MIGHT BE COMPROMISED BY WHAT HE HAD SAID DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

4. PRAVDA AND TV POLITICAL COMMENTATOR YURIY ZHUKOV HAD A GOOD DEAL TO SAY DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S APRIL 22 LUNCHEON FOR GARRISON. HIGHLIGHTS:

--WE HAVE BEEN DOINGOUR BEST NOT TO ADD ANYTHING NEGATIVE TO THE TONE OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, DESPITE WHAT WE HEAR FROM THE U.S. OCCASIONALLY WE HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING TO AVOID APPEARING TOO WEAK, BUT THAT IS ALL;

--WE HAVE NOT PLAYED UP THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE "SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE", WHICH WAS THE PRODUCT OF IRRESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM AND PUT THE PRESIDENT ON THE DEFENSIVE. WE UNDERTAND THAT HE THEN HAD TO BE EXTREME REGARDING "LIBERATION" OF EASTERN EUROPE, AND WE ARE RELAXED ABOUT IT;

--(TO GARRISON) PLEASE GIVE MY REGARDS TO SECRETARY KISSINGER. WE UNDERSTAND HIS POSITION AND DO NOT WANT TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR HIM. WE DO NOT LIKE MANY THINGS HE SAYS, BUT WE KEEP QUIET. TAKE ANGOLA, FOR EXAMPLE. IT IS RIDICULOUS TO THINK WE WANT BASES THERE, OR A COMMUNIST OR SOCIALIST REPUBLIC. OR TAKE THE
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QUESTION OF COMMUNISM IN WESTERN EUROPE: THE SECRETARY MADE SEVERAL EXTREME STATEMENTS WHICH INDEED WERE NOT USEFUL TO THE AMERICAN CAUSE BECAUSE THEY UNDULY ANTAGONIZED EUROPEANS. BUT WE LET THEM GO BY. DO GIVE HIM MY BEST WISHES AND SAY WE HOPE HE WILL STAY IN HIS POSITION.

--(AT THE CONCLUSION OF A TOAST) I HOPE THE EVENTUAL U.S. PRESIDENT WILL ENDORSE DETENTE AS STRONGLY AS DID GENERAL SECRETARY

BREZHNEV AT THE 25TH CONGRESS.

6. ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS, ACTING CHIEF OF THE MFA'S U.S. DIVISION KOMPLEKTOV, DEPUTY CHIEF FEDOSEYEV, AND COUNSELOR SOKOLOV WERE UNUSUALLY CORDIAL AND POSITIVE. FOR EXAMPLE:

--IN DISCUSSION WITH GARRISON AND THE ADCM OF SEVERAL CONTENTIOUS BILATERAL ISSUES, KOMPLEKTOV WAS (FOR HIM) MARKEDLY GRACIOUS, URGING THAT WE CONTINUE TO TALKS OUR PROBLEMS OUT;

--FEDOSEYEV SAID THE SOVIET SIDE WANTED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH BILATERAL ISSUES, THEN REELED OFF A LIST OF CURRENT ITEMS, INCLUDING SOVIET SAILING SHIPS FOR THE BICENTENNIAL REGATTA (ON THE WAY), U.S. VISIT OF RAYON CP SECRETARIES (ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE), BICENTENNIAL FILM FESTIVAL (STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION BUT PROBABLY ACCEPTABLE);

--SOKOLOV ASSURED GARRISON "WITH FULL AUTHORITY" THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WISHED TO MOVE AHEAD IN OUR RELATIONS AND WOULD DO SO "WHENEVER CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT."

7. HEAD OF PRAVDA'S NORTH AMERICA SECTION VISHNEVSKIY DESCRIBED SOVIET ECONOMIC POLICY TOWARD THE U.S. AS CHARACTERIZED BY LOW-KEY NON-SPECTACULAR FORWARD MOTION, WITHIN THE BOUNDS SET BY ABSENCE OF MFN AND EXPORT CREDITS. NOTING THAT THE SOVIETS APPRECIATED THE VALUE OF KEEPING THE ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL SIDE OF THINGS PUBLICLY SUBDUED AND RHETORIC-FREE DURING THE CAMPAIGN, VISHNEVSKIY SAID THE SOVIETS RECOGNIZED THE PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY FOR CONGRESS TO LEGISLATE AMENDMENTS IN THE TRADE ACT DURING THE CURRENT SESSION BUT HOPED THE TRADITIONAL "HONEYMOON" BETWEEN A NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT AND A NEW CONGRESS MIGHT IN EARLY 1977 PERMIT TRADE/EXIMBANK AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD OFFER THE USSR MFN AND EXPORT CREDITS ON A NON-DISCRIMINATORY BASIS.

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8. THE POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE OF THE GARRISON VISIT WAS ALSO MARKED BY ATTENDANCE AT THE ADCM'S APRIL 21 LUNCHEON OF AMERICAN SPECIALIST IN THE CC'S INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT NIKOLAY MOSTOVETS, WHO WAS RELAXED, NONPOLEMICAL, AND GENERALLY UPBEAT ON RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WHILE HE PREFERRED TO LET OTHERS TAKE THE LEAD IN CONVERSATION, HE ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH SEVERAL TOASTS AND ACROSS-THE-TABLE COMMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVED U.S.-SOVIET TIES.

9. ON BALANCE, THE SOVIETS WITH WHOM GARRISON HAD CONTACT SEEMED UNANIMOUS IN WISHING TO CONVEY THAT THE USSR'S POLICY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES HAD NOT BEEN ALTERED, AND THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD CONTINUE TO STRIVE FOR GOOD RELATIONS AND WOULD SHOW RESTRAINT AND UNDERSTANDING--IF NOT ALWAYS APPROVAL--OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION IN THE U.S. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

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